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HEALTH CARE

## REHABILITATION, AGEING AND INDEPENDENT LIVING (RAIL) RESEARCH CENTRE

### Member eBulletin #2

#### A message from the Director

October has been a busy month for the centre with applications closing for our first research fellow position, the awarding of the first round of Early-Mid Career Researcher (EMCR) grants, as well as meetings with key university staff and external partners. Grant applications have been submitted and additional grants are being prepared for submission soon. Plans are underway for the development of a 'RAIL Partners' network, and a 'Friends of RAIL' network (for community and consumer engagement), with more information to be provided in coming months. Our member network has now grown to over 80 members and the first forum was held this week at Peninsula campus. It was wonderful to see so many staff from across disciplines and faculties. We hope that these forums provide members with valuable information and assist to broaden research connections across the university. We would appreciate any feedback or suggestions about the content or format of these forums (to [spahc.rail@monash.edu](mailto:spahc.rail@monash.edu))

One of the roles I have had is as President of the Asia Oceania Region of the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (2013-2017) and am currently immediate past-President, and still on the Regional Council. At the

recent Regional Congress in Taipei last week, I had the honour of being awarded The Chairman's Award for leadership over many years to the development of gerontology and geriatrics in the Region. Asia Oceania is an extremely diverse region in terms of its ageing profile, and the differing points in this journey, and one that I see that our researchers can interact, share and learn with. During the conference I also met with the Director of the Gerotechnology Laboratory at Monash Malaysia (Associate Professor Pei Lee Teh) and discussed potential opportunities for building linkages between RAIL and Monash Malaysia.



## Staff profile - Ms Libby Callaway



Libby Callaway is a senior Occupational Therapist with 25 years experience working with people with neurotrauma, across inpatient and community rehabilitation settings in Victoria and internationally in the United States of America. She holds a strong interest in service co-design with people with disability, and delivery of innovative housing, technology and support design for independent living. Libby will lead the Independent Living arm of RAIL.

## Grants

### Early-Mid Career Researcher Grant

The first round of RAIL Early-Mid Career Research (EMCR) grants closed on Friday 4th October. We received a large number of applications and good quality of proposals and projects.

We are pleased to advise first round grants (valued up to \$15,000 each) have been awarded to:

- Vera COSTA (Department of General Practice) - *Quality of life and mental wellbeing in family carers of people with dementia during the transition period to residential aged care.*
- Sze-Ee SOH (Department of Physiotherapy) - *Beyond the 'old and frail' – translating falls prevention evidence into osteoarthritis care*
- Em BOULD (Department of Occupational Therapy) - *Fostering and suPAWting engagement in meaningful activity and social connection:*

*Dogs as a conduit to community inclusion for people with cognitive disabilities*

- Surya Girinatha NURZAMAN (School of Engineering, Monash Malaysia)  
- *User Acceptance Analysis of an Affordable Soft Service Robot in Object Retrieval Tasks*

Thank you to those who submitted applications and congratulations to the award winners. There will be a further funding round in the first quarter of 2020.

## News



### Emerging Technologies Panel

On 18th October, Libby Callaway (Independent Living Stream Lead, RAIL) participated in a panel on emerging technologies hosted by the Hopkins Centre

in Brisbane as part of their [2019 Bold Ideas Better Solutions Symposium](#). Other panel members included the new director of the Disability Innovation Institute at the University of Sydney, [Professor Jacki Leach Scully](#), and 2019 Queensland Young Australian of the Year and CEO of [The Attitude Foundation](#), Angel Dixon.

Panel members discussed the current opportunities and challenges with the emerging mainstream and assistive technology market, the importance of technology user co-design, individualised and customised approaches to technology, and ongoing evaluation of effectiveness over time. To ensure best practice approaches to the use of technology to build independent living, the group also discussed the need for research to inform government policy. Discussion included the [National Disability Insurance Scheme assistive technology strategy](#), the Australian Government's [Artificial Intelligence Ethics Framework](#) and the current Regulatory Impact Assessment by the Australian Building Codes Board in relation to [accessible housing](#).

This panel was moderated by ABC Brisbane radio host, Kelly Higgins-Devine, and will be aired on ABC Brisbane radio in the coming weeks.

## **Royal Commission into Aged Care**

On 31st October 2019, the Interim Report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care was submitted to the Governor-General and tabled in Parliament. This is the first report from the appointed Commissioners, informed by the ongoing hearings and submissions made to the Commission.

The report is titled, "Neglect", and provides a detailed insight to the current issues in the Aged Care system in Australia that must be addressed to improve outcomes of all Australians interacting with this system.

The Commissioners identified three areas for immediate action:

1. Provide more Home Care Packages to reduce the waiting list for higher level care at home

2. Respond to the significant over-reliance on chemical restraint in aged care, including through the seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement
3. Stop the flow of younger people with a disability going into aged care, and speed up the process of getting out those young people who are already in aged care.

While the report does present a strong case for major reform in the system, which we hope will be translated into significant changes in the short and longer term, we do acknowledge that a considerable number of organisations and many of their staff working in the aged care / residential care sector are doing very good work, and are passionate and dedicated to their clients / residents and their work, despite some major short-comings in the system in which they are working.

To read the media release, forward and full interim report, go to <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/Pages/interim-report.aspx>

You can also order a hard copy of the interim report from the Commission website.

## **MBS / PBS data for an economic evaluation alongside a clinical trial**

On the 1st of November Tash Brusco attended an MBS / PBS data seminar which covered both the theoretical considerations for use of MBS / PBS data as well as technical aspects for analysis of the data. The full day event in Sydney highlighted that researchers currently have free access to aggregate MBS / PBS data via the commonwealth government. However, researchers wanting to access individual patient level data are required to seek approval for access to a unique data cut for a particular clinical trial, or for access to the established data cuts including the MBS / PBS 10% sample data, MBS / PBS data for the 45 and Up study cohort, and the 2013/14 MBS / PBS release to the States and

Territories. These data sets are limited to the MBS / PBS lists of subsidised items being paid by the commonwealth government, and exclude the non-MBS / PBS items and MBS / PBS items when an individual is not eligible.

It is noted that the MBS / PBS data does not include the indication for the item, nor does it tell us if the patient took the PBS medication. For the indication, researchers are required to make an educated guess to determine a proxy for the indication, e.g. blood glucose blood test is likely to be related to diabetes or pre-diabetes investigation, or triangulate the data with another data set. MBS / PBS data also needs to be interpreted with caution. While this is a national data set there are some points of difference between the different states and territories, for example, a procedure in one state may be considered a day-procedure inpatient service which is excluded from MBS for public patients, and considered an out-patient appointment in another state which is included on the MBS.

Fun fact: the current list of PBS items is downloadable in a PDF which is 1,500 pages long!

## **2018 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers**

Recently, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) released the findings of the 2018 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers. Key findings from the Survey included:

### **Disability**

- In 2018 there were 4.4 million Australians with disability, 17.7% of the population, down from 18.3% in 2015.
- The prevalence of disability increased with age - one in nine (11.6%) people aged 0-64 years and one in two (49.6%) people aged 65 years and over had disability.
- Disability prevalence was similar for males (17.6%) and females (17.8%).
- 5.7% of all Australians had a profound or severe disability.

- Almost one-quarter (23.2%) of all people with disability reported a mental or behavioural disorder as their main condition, up from 21.5% in 2015.

Of those with disability (living in households):

- one-third (33.4%) of those aged 15 years and over had completed year 12 or equivalent, up from 31.4% in 2015
- one in six (16.1%) aged 15 years and over had a Bachelor degree or above, up from 14.9% in 2015
- 37.9% of those aged 15-64 years said their main source of personal income was a government pension or allowance, down from 41.9% in 2015
- 59.7% of people had their need for assistance fully met, down from 62.1% in 2015
- one in 10 (9.6%) aged 15 years and over had experienced discrimination in the previous 12 months because of their disability, up from 8.6% in 2015
- labour force participation for those aged 15-64 years has remained stable since 2015 at 53.4%, in contrast to an increase in the participation rate for people without disability (84.1%)
- 11.4% of those with a profound or severe disability (aged 15-64 years) were working full-time up from 7.9% in 2015.

## **Older people**

- One in every six Australians (15.9% or 3.9 million people) was aged 65 years and over (up from 15.1% in 2015).
- Most older Australians (persons aged 65 years and over) were living in households (95.3%), with 4.6% living in cared accommodation.
- Half (49.6%) of all older Australians had disability (similar to 2015).
- 1.3 million older Australians living at home needed some assistance with everyday activities, and of these, almost two-thirds (65.9%) had their need fully met (down from 69.2% in 2015).

- Two-thirds (68.1%) of older Australians (who reported income) lived in a low-income household (a household earning less than \$756 per week).
- Almost all older Australians had participated in social activities at home (97.4%) or outside their home (94.4%) in the previous three months.

## Carers

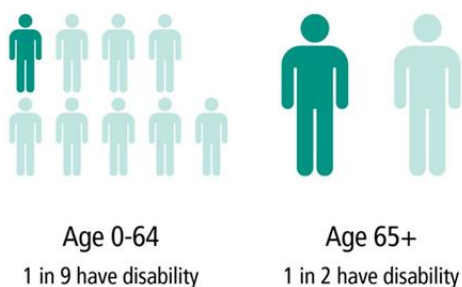
- There were 2.65 million carers, representing 10.8% of all Australians (down from 11.6% in 2015).
- Females were more likely to be carers (12.3% of all females) than males (9.3% of all males).
- There were 235,300 young carers (under the age of 25), down from 274,700 in 2015.
- 3.5% of all Australians were primary carers.
- Seven in ten (71.8%) primary carers were women.
- Over one-third, (37.4%) of primary carers had disability, twice the rate of non-carers (15.3%).
- The most common reason primary carers gave for taking on a caring role was a sense of family responsibility (70.1% of all primary carers).
- Half (50.2%) of all carers lived in a household in the lowest two equivalised gross income quintiles, twice that of non-carers (25.6%).

You can read the [ABS Media Release here](#), and there is more information available on the ABS website via the link below:

<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4430.0Main+Features12018?OpenDocument>

### Disability increases with age

Rates of disability for Australians



## Events



### Member forums

A successful first forum was held at Peninsula campus on Thursday 31st October. Staff from across the School and Faculty were provided with an opportunity to learn about RAIL and strengthen networks.

***The next RAIL member forum will be held:***

Title: Who's doing what in ageing research? – RAIL members share 5 min presentations about their research interest area.

Presenter/s: RAIL members and invited guests

Venue: Meeting Room C1.02, Building C, Peninsula campus

Date and time: 3pm - 4pm Wednesday 11th December

RSVP: [Online](#) by 2/12 (zoom options will be available)

A call will be circulated in the next couple of weeks to RAIL members who would like to take part in the 5 minute presentations. Presentations will be no longer than 5 minutes long with a maximum of 5 PowerPoint slides (using a set criteria).

## RAIL Launch

The official Rehabilitation, Ageing and Independent Living Research Centre launch will be held in early 2020. Further information will be circulated shortly.

## Early and mid-career research support activities

Although the staffing level for RAIL at this point is small, we are keen to provide support for any early or mid career researcher that we can. We are happy to provide an external review perspective of grants you are preparing as one avenue of support. If you like to discuss possibly accessing this service, please email Cassie in the first instance ([spahc.rail@monash.edu](mailto:spahc.rail@monash.edu)).

## Upcoming conferences

- November 4-5 2019, Sydney - 18th National Conference of Emerging Researchers in Ageing. Theme: Equity and Diversity.  
- <http://www.era.edu.au/ERA+2019>
- November 5-8 2019, Sydney – 52<sup>nd</sup> Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG) conference. Theme: Coming of age together-New ways of knowing and acting. -<https://www.aag.asn.au/national-conference/2019-conference>
- Annual General Meeting of the Australian Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Association (ARATA), including a panel discussion by national Assistive Technology Stakeholders, hosted in Melbourne on 13th November 2019 at 5pm on the close of Day 2 of the Oceanic Seating Symposium  
<https://www.arata.org.au/>
- Oceanic Seating Symposium, hosted in Melbourne, 12th to 14th November 2019  
<http://www.cmnzl.co.nz/oceania-seating-symposium/>
- December 4-7 2019, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia – 1<sup>st</sup> World Congress on Falls and Postural Stability. NOTE – Late breaking abstracts being accepted until October 31 - <http://wcfps2019.org/#>

- May 27-29 2020, Melbourne – The Australian and New Zealand Society of Geriatric Medicine Annual Scientific Meeting. Theme: Vision for the future. Abstract submission open (closes February 2020). <http://www.anzsgmconference.org/>
- Abstract submissions opening on 19th October 2019 for the Australian & New Zealand Association for Health Professional Educators (ANZAHPE) 2020 Conference, hosted in Melbourne, 12th July to 15th July, 2020 <https://www.anzahpe.org/2020-conference>
- Latest NDIS-hosted events for Scheme participants, families and/or providers  
See <https://www.ndis.gov.au/news/events>

If you are aware of any other conferences that may be relevant to members of RAIL, please forward details (if possible, before the timing of closure of abstract submissions).

## Member contributions

We would love to showcase current research from our members. We invite you to submit a short story (and relevant images) about any research you are working on that aligns with RAIL. Submissions are due by the 30th of each month to [spahc.rail@monash.edu](mailto:spahc.rail@monash.edu)